



Influence of Parental Involvement on Students' Career Aspiration in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined influence of parental involvement on students' career aspiration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three objectives of the study, three research questions and three hypotheses that guided the conduct of the study. The research design used for the study was a descriptive survey design. The population of this study was 11,920 senior secondary II (SSII) students of all Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State for the 2024/2025 academic sessions. The sample size of the study was 400 students that was drawn from the three Rivers State Senatorial District. The multistage sampling technique was employed in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Parental Involvement on Students' Career Aspiration Questionnaire". The instrument was rated using four-point rating scale. The data collected was analyzed using frequency table, weighted mean score and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at a significant level of 0.05. Based on the data analysis, the finding of the study revealed that parental expectations, parents' guidance support, parent-child relationship and over-parenting influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study recommends that: government, through the ministry of education should establish counselling unit in all the schools in the State to enable parents and students have access to counsel, government and non-governmental organization should organize seminar programmes for the parents and teachers on how to guide and support the students and school management should subject parents, teachers and students to counselling on how to improve parent-child relationship.

Keywords: Influence, Parental Involvement, Students, Career Aspiration

INTRODUCTION

Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of the individual not only because it determines the pattern of income but also because it affects the individual's personality and concepts in life. A career, therefore, is a choice pursuit, life work or success in one's profession occupied by a person throughout his/her lifetime. Bourdieu (2018) stated that a career is the totality of work one does in his/her lifetime and is person-centered, and is of utmost importance to every individual as he/she prepares for the future. A career can be defined as the sequence and variety of occupations undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress. More broadly, career includes life roles, leisure activities, learning and work. It includes the sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles an individual undertake throughout life. A career of one's interest makes a person to perform job without complaining, goes to work early and would love to work even till late hours because he values his career as more important (Weyi, 2023).

Career aspiration is the most important event in an individual's life. A person's success and consequently; satisfaction and happiness depend accurately on chosen career as improper selection of career or frequently changing career may be very harmful for psychological health. Watsone, (2018) opined that once we invest time, money, and effort in moving along a particular career path it may not be easy to change the path. It is well known that individuals who make career choices based on personal interests and abilities, show significantly higher levels of job satisfaction and are more productive workers (Tsey, 2018). Senior secondary school students who have gone through comprehensive career counselling may dissent their career choices, while students who make career choices without adequate and accurate counselling and guidance are at risk of being impelled to choose careers that are not suitable for them. Choice of career is not only central to one's lifestyle but also a vital aspect of the physical and emotional well-being of the individuals and their families as the choice of career is a crucial problem for a student (Weyi, 2023).

In collectivist cultures like India, where family expectations and interdependence are deeply embedded, parents act as primary decision-makers in their children's. Family expectations often play a dominant role in career decision-making. Parents frequently prioritize financially secure and socially prestigious careers, such as medicine and engineering, over students' personal interests. In Bhutan, economic pressures were found to influence parents to guide their children toward stable career options, often limiting the exploration of unconventional paths. Despite these constraints, studies show that parental encouragement remains essential in fostering students' confidence and independence in making career decisions.

Hussain (2018) opined that every individual has choice/aspirations in life because there are choices in life available to all. Whatsoever therefore happens to one whether positive or negative is a choice made by the individual among the multiple of choices life that exist. Even when one refuses to make a choice among all choices in life; that act of not making a choice is a choice. It is however very vital to note that the process of choice making, its availability and its importance may be a significant factor in the difference between one individual and another (Aliyu, 2022). When secondary school students indicate their career aspirations, career, counsellors will look into socioeconomic status, family background; parental attitude; peer group pressure; self- efficacy; personality; interests; aptitude; role models; vocational decision making styles; social class; cultural identity; globalization and gender as the important determinants of career choice (Akanem, 2020). Extant literature reveals that parental involvement may influence career aspirations among secondary school students. It therefore became pertinent to examine influence of parental involvement on students' career aspiration in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Conceptual of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in career aspiration is deeply rooted in various theoretical perspectives. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) explains how behavior, such as career aspiration, is influenced by attitudes and subjective norms, including parental expectations (Jones, 2014). Social Cognitive Theory highlights the importance of observational learning and modeling, emphasizing parents' roles as critical sources of guidance and encouragement in shaping career aspirations (Rogers &. Person-Environment Fit theories (Nauta, 2018) underscore the significance of aligning students' strengths and interests with career opportunities, a process often facilitated by parental discussions and support. Developmental Career Theories (Super, 2017) provide a dynamic view of parental influence, showing how it evolves from direct control during childhood to collaborative and supportive roles in adolescence.

Parental involvement is also linked to improved academic performance, which serves as a foundation for career aspirations. A meta-analysis by Fan and Chen (2021) showed that parental engagement enhances academic achievement and, by extension, career confidence. Wang and Dong (2024), in a meta-analysis, identified a significant relationship between supportive parental behaviors and students' career adaptability, emphasizing the role of parents in helping adolescents navigate complex career landscapes. Super (2017) found a positive correlation between parental

encouragement and self-efficacy in career aspiration among young adults in India. (Nauta, 2018), in their systematic review, examined existing literature on factors that influence youths' career choices in both collectivist and individualistic cultural settings across diverse cultural contexts. The authors found that youth from collectivist cultures were mainly influenced by family expectations, and a higher career congruence with parents increased career confidence and self-efficacy. In individualistic settings, personal interest was highlighted as the major factor that influenced career choice, and the youth were more independent in their career decision-making.

Career aspiration is an important event that affects the life course of college students, and avoiding career aspiration difficulties has long been recognized as a critical lifelong pursuit for individuals. Career decisions can play a crucial role in an individual's career development regarding job performance, career satisfaction, and career success. Especially for college students during the job-seeking period, career-related decisions are challenging, and being under high stress may lead to career indecision (Gati, 2022).

There are many reasons for college students' career indecision, such as changing social patterns, incomplete college education programs for career planning and career aspiration counseling, and poor college students' autonomy in employment (Koçak, 2021). These issues can be addressed through career-related support provided by parents, such as assistance in finding information about career choices and improving college students' self-awareness (interests, values). However, for parents, inappropriate levels of control, involvement, and assistance with their children can instead lead to their children experiencing stress, confusion, lack of confidence, and indecision when choosing a career direction. In recent years, such over-parenting behaviors have also become prevalent in the lives of college students, and the incidence is rapidly increasing (Furstenberg 2020). Therefore, to effectively prevent and scientifically control the career indecision of college students, the present study takes college students in the job-seeking stage as the research object and starts from over-parenting, taking into account career expectation pressure, career decision self-efficacy and expectation congruence and other factors, to fully understand the link between over-parenting and college students' career indecision, in order to help college students reduce the reverse impact of over-parenting on career development.

Parental Expectations Influence Students' Career Aspirations

Parental expectations play a powerful role in shaping students' career aspirations that is, their hopes, goals, and intentions for future occupations (Lent, 2014). These expectations can serve as both a motivating force and a source of pressure, depending on how they are communicated and supported. Parental expectations can powerfully shape students' career aspirations by influencing their values, motivation, opportunities, and confidence. When these expectations are realistic, supportive, and aligned with the student's interests, they can positively guide career development. When overly rigid, they may lead to pressure and conflict. Shaping Career Goals and Values: Parents often serve as a child's first role model. Their expectations help define: What careers are viewed as "successful" or "acceptable." The importance placed on income, status, or job security. Whether higher education or vocational training is prioritized. Students may aspire to careers that align with their parents' values, even if those differ from their personal interests.

Encouraging Academic Effort: When parents expect their children to achieve educational and career success: Students are more likely to set high academic goals. They develop a stronger sense of purpose in school. Higher academic motivation and performance, leading to more ambitious career aspirations (Rajan, 2024). Providing Resources and Opportunities: Parents with high expectations often: Invest in tutoring, mentorship, or career exposure activities. Encourage participation in clubs, science fairs, or internships. Students gain early exposure to career options, which informs and expands their aspirations.

Parents' Guidance Support Influences Students' Career Aspirations

Parents' guidance support in the form of advice, encouragement, exposure, and emotional backing plays a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations. This support helps students form realistic, motivated, and well-informed decisions about their future careers (Rajan, 2024). Parents' guidance support positively influences students' career aspirations by offering emotional encouragement, practical advice, and access to resources. When parents are actively involved in guiding their children's career thinking, students are more likely to develop ambitious, informed, and achievable career goals. Parents' guidance can positively influence students' career aspirations by providing motivation and encouragement, helping them to pursue their passions and overcome obstacles. Additionally, parental support can boost a child's self-esteem and career self-efficacy, leading to greater success in their chosen paths.

Essential guidance of youth begins from their home, along these lines, if the parents are profoundly qualified, the youth might get incredible bearing and motivation from their parents. Adulthood is an indispensable season of future in calling progression wherein livelihood wants are critical. Child's livelihood aspirations move from dream speculations to logically consistent and functional choices during the optional school years, especially in the upper assessments and they are huge starting boundaries for calling improvement in adulthood (Lent, 2019). Contrasted and other recognized factors forming youth' employment aspirations, family, especially the work of parents, will undoubtedly be considered as fundamental in the game plan of child's calling yearning.

Parents' guidance and support about their children's future career are basic as these potential outcomes might possibly affect truly and, perhaps more fundamentally, by suggestion the way where parents draw in with their children career at various levels and in a few cases with scholarly accomplishment (Rajan, 2024). In the adulthood youth search for course of action of their career issues from their accomplished parents and endeavor to avoid those aspirations which unsatisfactory for their folks. parents routinely set high, but hopeful, standards for school achievement that are acknowledged to convince their youth toward productive career, for instance, the two dads and moms were viewed as the most grounded impacts on career yearning. Parents are in this manner saw as an imperative wellspring of help and backing in youth' informative and vocation interests. Their exercises develop youth' feelings in their own abilities to successfully play out a given assignment. Along these lines, in career advancement of child's parents experience are essential cause of impact.

Parent-Child Communication Influences Students' Career Aspirations

The parent-child relationship plays a foundational role in shaping a student's career aspirations that is, the dreams, goals, and plans they develop for their future professional life. A relationship built on trust, communication, and emotional support can guide students to explore their interests, believe in their potential, and pursue meaningful careers. A positive parent-child relationship fosters the emotional stability, confidence, communication, and values that are essential for developing informed and meaningful career aspirations (Leung, 2021). When parents are involved, understanding, and supportive, students are more likely to set and pursue ambitious career goals that align with both their interests and abilities.

In strong parent-child relationships: Children feel safe to express their interests and concerns about the future. Parents are more likely to listen actively and provide thoughtful guidance. Students are more likely to make career decisions that reflect both their personal interests and practical advice from their parents (Wen, 2023). A positive and supportive parent-child communication and relationship can significantly influence a student's career aspirations by fostering self-belief, encouraging exploration, and providing a foundation for informed decision-making. Conversely, a strained or overly controlling relationship can negatively impact a student's career choices, leading to anxiety, lack of confidence, or even career paths that don't align with their true interests. The parent-child relationship plays a crucial role in shaping a student's career aspirations. A healthy and supportive relationship fosters confidence, exploration, and informed decision-making, while a strained relationship can lead to anxiety, unrealistic expectations, and career choices that don't align with the student's true potential (Shim, 2017). Therefore, parents should strive to create a nurturing

and encouraging environment where their children feel empowered to pursue their career aspirations.

Increased Self-Efficacy: Secure parent-child relationships equip students with the confidence to explore various career options and take calculated risks, leading to greater self-efficacy in career decision-making. **Open Communication and Guidance:** When parents create a safe space for open communication, students feel more comfortable discussing their career aspirations and seeking guidance, which helps them navigate the complexities of career planning (Rajan, 2024). **Role Modeling and Exposure:** Parents who demonstrate positive work habits, job satisfaction, and a passion for learning can serve as powerful role models, inspiring their children to pursue similar paths or to explore diverse career options. **Supportive Environment:** A supportive and encouraging environment, where parents provide emotional support and practical assistance, empowers students to pursue their career goals without fear of failure. **Aligned Values:** When parents' values align with their children's, it can create a sense of purpose and direction in their career choices, leading to more fulfilling and meaningful professional lives.

Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement refers to the active participation and engagement of parents or caregivers in their children's education, development, choice of career and general well-being. It is assumed that without proper guidance, students may end up not fulfilling their goals in life as it is a fact that most students have challenges of choosing an occupation and relating personal skills, interests, and abilities to careers. However, some students may be influenced by careers that their parents favour, others may follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some may choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or how little it will impact on them while others may choose the careers that give high income.

Keen observation by the researcher indicates that students may not be objective in their decision when choosing a career as some ambitious parents may dictate their own unfulfilled career decisions on their children and compel them to choose the courses which perhaps they did not like, or they were not able to complete. Again, some students may have parents who are aware of psychometric testing and career counselling sessions and such parents may be able to help their children select a proper career for themselves. To eliminate any chance of regret, senior secondary school students are in need of proper career guidance and the family atmosphere that would foster the right career choice. The study therefore examines influence of parental involvement on students' career aspiration in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Socio economic factors or status of parents, students from lower income backgrounds potentially facing more challenges in accessing career opportunities and resources.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of parental involvement on students' career aspiration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to attain the following objectives;

- 1 To determine the extent to which parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- 2 To ascertain the extent to which parents' guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- 3 To find out the extent to which parent-child communication influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

2. To what extent do parents guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent do parent-child relationship influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The researcher formulated the following null hypotheses that guided the study:

- 1 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- 2 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parents' guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- 3 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parent-child communication influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive research design helps to solve the existing problem or condition but also it was used for comparing features of a group. The population of this study was 11,920 senior secondary II (SSII) students of all Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State for the 2024/2025 academic sessions. The population was drawn from three local government areas. The sample size of the study was 400 students that was drawn from the three Rivers State Senatorial District. This figure was generated using Taro Yamene formula. The multistage sampling technique was employed in the study. This study used a self-structured questionnaire for data collection titled "Influence of Parental Involvement on Students' Career Aspiration Questionnaire (IPISCAQ). The instrument was divided into two sections. The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The criterion decision rule is that any mean score that were from 2.50 and above is accepted, while the mean score that were less than 2.50 is rejected. The null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: To what extent does parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/No	Questionnaire Items	Male Students = 150			Female Students = 250		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	
1.	Parents often serve as a child's first role model by guiding their career path	2.89	0.85	High Extent	2.95	0.86	High Extent
2.	Parents expect their children to achieve educational and career success	2.86	0.83	High Extent	2.86	0.84	High Extent

3.	Children internalize what their parents believe about them	2.78	0.83	High Extent	2.91	0.85	High Extent
4.	Parents help students see themselves as capable of achieving prestigious careers	2.83	0.84	High Extent	2.82	0.84	High Extent
5.	Parental expectations significantly influence students' career aspirations	2.86	0.84	High Extent	2.86	0.84	High Extent
Grand Total		2.84	0.84		2.88	0.85	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents that items 1 to 5 have means of 2.89, 2.86, 2.78, 2.83, 2.86 for male students with standard deviations ranging from 0.85 to 0.84 and means of 2.95, 2.86, 2.91, 2.82, 2.86 for female students with standard deviations ranging from 0.86 to 0.84 which indicate “High Extent” on the extent parental expectations influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Also, the grand means for male students and female students are 2.84 and 2.88 respectively, further confirming a “High Extent” on the extent parental expectations influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, it is found that parental expectations has significant influence on students’ career aspirations to a High Extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does parents guidance support influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent parents guidance support influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/ No	Questionnaire Items	Male Students = 150			Female Students = 250		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	
6.	Parents introduce students to a variety of career options by sharing knowledge about job requirements	2.86	0.84	High Extent	2.91	0.85	High Extent
7.	Parents influence what careers children perceive as meaningful, respectable, or successful	2.83	0.84	High Extent	2.95	0.86	High Extent
8.	Parents help students plan their academic paths in line with career goals	2.97	0.86	High Extent	2.98	0.86	High Extent
9.	Parental guidance provides: Emotional support during times of decision-making and reassurance when students feel uncertain or overwhelmed	2.94	0.86	High Extent	2.99	0.86	High Extent
10.	Students higher self-confidence leads to more ambitious and resilient career aspirations	2.97	0.86	High Extent	2.98	0.86	High Extent
Grand Total		2.90	0.85		2.97	0.86	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The information in table 2 shows that items 6 to 10 have means of 2.86, 2.83, 2.97, 2.94, 2.97 for male students with standard deviations ranging from 0.84 to 0.86 and means of 2.91, 2.95, 2.98, 2.99, 2.98 for female students with standard deviations ranging from 0.85 to 0.86 indicating a “High

Extent” on the extent parents guidance support influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The grand means for male and female students are respectively, 2.90 and 2.97, which is a confirmation of “High Extent” on the extent parents guidance support influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The above results imply that parents’ guidance support has positive influence on students’ career aspirations to a High Extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent does parent-child relationship influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation analysis on the extent parent-child relationship influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/ No	Questionnaire Items	Male Students = 150			Female Students = 250		
		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD		Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	
11.	Children feel safe to <u>express their interests and concerns</u> about the future	2.83	0.84	High Extent	2.91	0.85	High Extent
12.	Parents are more likely to listen actively and provide thoughtful guidance to their children	2.72	0.82	High Extent	2.86	0.84	High Extent
13.	Students are more likely to make career decisions that reflect both <u>their personal interests</u> and <u>practical advice</u> from their parents	2.75	0.83	High Extent	2.93	0.85	High Extent
14.	Students with supportive parents tend to <u>aspire to more challenging or prestigious careers</u> because they feel emotionally equipped to pursue them	2.69	0.82	High Extent	2.95	0.86	High Extent
15.	Strong parent-child bonds help students navigate their academic challenges and career indecision or societal expectations	2.67	0.82	High Extent	2.87	0.85	High Extent
Grand Total		2.73	0.83		2.90	0.85	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents that items 11 to 15 have means of 2.83, 2.73, 2.75, 2.69, 2.67 for male students with standard deviations ranging from 0.84 to 0.82 and means of 2.91, 2.86, 2.93, 2.95, 2.87 for female students with standard deviations ranging from 0.85 to 0.85 which indicate “High Extent” on the extent parent-child relationship influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Also, the grand means for male students and female students are 2.73 and 2.90 respectively, further confirming a “High Extent” on the extent parent-child relationship influence students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. However, it was found that parent-child relationship has significant influence on students’ career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a High Extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 4: Z-test Analysis of significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean $\bar{X}$	Standard Deviation	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Students	150	2.84	0.84	398	1.29	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	250	2.88	0.85				

The analysis in Table 4 revealed that the z-cal of 1.29 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 1 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parents' guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-test Analysis of significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parents' guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean $\bar{X}$	Standard Deviation	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Students	150	2.90	0.85	398	1.24	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	250	2.97	0.86				

The analysis on Table 5 indicated that the z-cal of 1.24 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance, since it is less than the given critical value of z-ratio. Therefore, the hypothesis 2 is thus accepted, and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parents' guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parent-child communication influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 6: Z-test Analysis of significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parent-child communication influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Status	N	Mean $\bar{X}$	Standard Deviation	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Students	150	2.73	0.83	398	1.21	1.96	Accepted
Female Students	250	2.90	0.85				

The analysis in Table 6 revealed that the z-cal of 1.21 is less than the z-crit of 1.96. Therefore, the calculated z-ratio is not statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance since it is smaller than the given critical value of z-ratio. So, the hypothesis 3 is thus accepted and the conclusion is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which parent-child communication influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study in research question one: To what extent does parental expectations influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State revealed that parental expectations has positive influence on students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a large extent. This finding is in collaboration with Lent (2014) who admitted that parental expectations play a powerful role in shaping students' career aspirations that is, their hopes, goals, and intentions for future occupations. These expectations can serve as both a motivating force and a source of pressure, depending on how they are communicated and supported. Parental expectations can powerfully shape students' career aspirations by influencing their values, motivation, opportunities, and confidence. When these expectations are realistic, supportive, and aligned with the student's interests, they can positively guide career development. When overly rigid, they may lead to pressure and conflict.

The study in Research Questions 2: To what extent does parents guidance support influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State indicated that parents' guidance support has significant influence on students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This study is in the same view with Martincin & Stead (2014) who asserts that parents' guidance support in the form of advice, encouragement, exposure, and emotional backing plays a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations. This support helps students form realistic, motivated, and well-informed decisions about their future careers. Parents' guidance support positively influences students' career aspirations by offering emotional encouragement, practical advice, and access to resources. They note that when parents are actively involved in guiding their children's career thinking, students are more likely to develop ambitious, informed, and achievable career goals. Parents' guidance can positively influence students' career aspirations by providing motivation and encouragement, helping them to pursue their passions and overcome obstacles. Additionally, parental support can boost a child's self-esteem and career self-efficacy, leading to greater success in their chosen paths.

The findings of the study in Research Question 3: To what extent does parent-child relationship influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State showed that parent-child relationship has positive influence on students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The finding is in the same vein with Leung (2021) who reviewed that the parent-child relationship plays a foundational role in shaping a student's career aspirations that is, the dreams, goals, and plans they develop for their future professional life. A relationship built on trust, communication, and emotional support can guide students to explore their interests, believe in their potential, and pursue meaningful careers. A positive parent-child relationship fosters the emotional stability, confidence, communication, and values that are essential for developing informed and meaningful career aspirations. When parents are involved, understanding, and supportive, students are more likely to set and pursue ambitious career goals that align with both their interests and abilities.

CONCLUSION

The influence of parental involvement on students' career aspiration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State cannot be over emphasized. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that parental expectations, parents' guidance support, parent-child relationship and over-parenting influence students' career aspirations in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study also deduced that Parental involvement is also linked to improved academic performance, which serves as a foundation for career aspirations and that Career aspiration is an important event that affects the life course of college students, and avoiding career aspiration difficulties has long been recognized as a critical lifelong pursuit for individuals. Career decisions can play a crucial role in an individual's career development regarding job performance, career satisfaction, and career success. Especially for college students during the job-seeking period, career-related decisions are challenging, and being under high stress may lead to career indecision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to ensure that the study meet its objectives.

1. Government, through the ministry of education should establish counselling unit in all the schools in the State to enable parents and students have access to counsel.
2. Government and non-governmental organization should organize seminar programmes for the parents and teachers on how to guide and support the students hence it influence students' career aspirations.
3. School management should subject parents, teachers and students to counselling on how to improve parent-child relationship because it influence students' career aspirations.

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